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Contact: Craig Orfield
Wednesday, January 26, 2005
202-224-6770

HELP CHAIRMAN ENZI PREDICTS ONGOING COOPERATION WITH PRESIDENT TO ADVANCE CRITICAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

Bethesda, MD – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee) today joined President Bush during his visit to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to outline some of his key health care initiatives for a second term.

Enzi, who recently took the helm of the Senate HELP Committee, praised the President's ongoing efforts to improve health care for all Americans, saying that he is committed to building bipartisan support to address the most critical health care issues facing the country and to helping move the President's health care initiatives through the Senate.

"Most people are concerned about their health insurance coverage and their costs. They want policies that are more affordable and accessible with more options," Enzi said.

"During the President's first term, we made some important health care reforms that we must continue to monitor and improve. A prescription drug benefit for Medicare is now on the books. In addition, the option of health savings accounts has been expanded to provide seniors and the young with an incentive to invest in these tax free health insurance alternatives."

Enzi said he also is encouraged by the President's vision for improving health care and patient safety through better and more widespread use of information technology and by the President's proposals to place a community health care centers or rural health clinics in the poorest counties in the country.

"There is still much left to do," Enzi added "I think the President will find the members of the HELP Committee willing to work cooperatively to improve public health on many fronts during the coming year."

Other health care issues Enzi has identified as priorities for the HELP Committee during the 109th Congress include:

- bioterrorism and public health preparedness;
- drug safety, approval and re-importation;
- flu vaccine production;
- expansion of rural and community health centers.

